

## Forming a Steering Committee

- 1) Don't rely on "sign-ups" to form the steering committee; instead, ask what skills/relationships/abilities are needed on the Steering Committee in order to achieve success, and then recruit the "dream team" that can lead the committee. Perhaps consider forming a "committee to recruit the Dream Team".
- 2) The key job of the Steering Committee is to "hold the business idea in trust for its eventual owners". Their job is NOT to "ensure that the business gets started", but to "ensure that strong due diligence is done in assessing the business idea".
- 3) All members of the Steering Committee must be people of impeccable integrity; if they are successful in their work, the Committee will be sitting in front of their peers at an equity drive asking for money from peers. Absence of integrity and reputation of integrity will kill the effort then, if not before.
- 4) Each Steering Committee needs a "champion", someone with "fire in the belly" for the project, who will keep the committee on task. If your steering committee lacks a "champion", and the developer is dragging everyone to meetings, that might very well be a sign that the project is not meant for this world.
- 5) Scope the committee membership around traditional skills (legal, accounting, relevant business or industry skills, etc), but also ensure representation from the key places where you think you'll be recruiting future members. Build the steering committee membership not just to do analysis, but to eventually market the business plan to member-owner-investors. Embody relevant diversity.
- 6) Once the equity drive is over, the work of the Steering Committee is done. Hold a party. Dismiss the Committee with profuse thanks; they have held the idea in trust for the eventual owners, and their job is complete. Some may want to run for the first board. That's fine, but just as you recruited for specific skills needed on the Steering Committee, now the organization should recruit/elect leaders that can successfully guide the implementation of the business plan, select staff, etc.

-Bill Patrie